

MINUTES

**McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission
1st Floor Community Development Conference Room
June 3, 2004
5:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman DeCabooter called the meeting to order at 5:11 p.m., noting the presence of a quorum.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Art DeCabooter, Chairman
Christine Kovach, Vice-Chair
Carla (5:15pm)
Virginia Korte
Erik Filsinger
Howard Myers
Arnold Roy
Solange Whitehead

Absent: Denny Carr
Laura Fisher
Don Ruff (excused)

Staff: Bob Cafarella
Claire Miller
Don Meserve

Visitors: Jim Ford, Assistant Fire Chief, Rural Metro
Dan Bunce, Rural Metro

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MAY 6, 2004 MEETING

ON MOTION MADE BY COMMISSIONER KORTE AND SECOND BY COMMISSIONER MYERS, THE MAY 6, 2004 MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS PRESENTED. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF 7-0.

UPDATE OF FIRE PREVENTION/SUPPRESSION IN THE PRESERVE.

Jim Ford, Assistant Chief, Rural Metro Fire Department, advised the Commission that an emergency plan for the Preserve would be updated in the near future to incorporate the new fire code for the city. He added that the new Fire Station Twelve at Scottsdale Airport was approaching completion, and would provide Scottsdale with another light air tanker base. The Mayor has the ability to close the Preserve after consulting with Rural Metro, when fire hazards are extreme.

Dan Bunce went on to give the Commissioners an overview of the preparation and prevention plans. He explained that the prevention phase included inspection and identification of problem areas, communicating with residents, and access issues. He went on to outline the preparedness phase, noting the training regimen for the firefighters and the type of equipment used by Rural Metro, and manpower

resources. Mr. Bunce went on to explain the daily intelligence report and efforts to predict indicators for higher fire incidence.

In reply to a question by Commissioner Kovach about making the protection of vegetation in the Preserve a priority, Mr. Bunce stated that life safety was the number one priority, followed by structures, and vegetation. He stressed the importance of balancing resources, and stated that protection of the Preserve was a priority for his department. He added that Preserve staff would be notified immediately of any Preserve fire issues, 24/7 for Claire Miller, Preserve Manager.

Commissioner Myers expressed concern about those residents bordering the Preserve and efforts to educate them as to fire prevention techniques. Mr. Bunce replied that door hangers are utilized. Assistant Chief Ford added that he was hopeful that the city would reprint the wildland fire brochures, which provide information relative to fire issues specific to the Preserve area. He went on to add that signage had been updated along Pima Road and that signage for official access points should also be updated.

COMMERCIAL PERMITS

Ms. Miller distributed a handout with discussion points for the commercial permit system, and noted that a draft document had been sent to the Commissioners. She requested that the Commissioners review the information. Ms. Miller thanked all who had participated in the preparation of the draft document, noting that a great deal of time had been spent on the document. She stated that after the Commissioners reached consensus, the document would be sent to legal staff in the City Attorney's Office for review and then return to the Commission for action before going to City Council for a hearing and approval.

Discussion ensued. Ms. Miller pointed out that the permit covered "for profit" entities and that a separate policy would be written to cover non-profits and one-time events. The Commissioners discussed the annual fee, liability coverage, and the permit renewal policy. There was continued discussion about required training and certification for guides and trip leaders.

Carla, Chair for the Planning Committee explained that efforts had been made to ensure that the areas to be utilized by the commercial group would not infringe on use by the general public. There was dialogue as to safety and enforcement issues. Commissioner Kovach suggested inclusion of several of the Preserve Stewards on the Planning Committee. Carla indicated that there was some urgency in getting the document onto legal staff.

Following the discussion, Chairman DeCabooter asked staff to submit the commercial permitting procedures to the City Attorney's Office so they can begin preparing an ordinance. The Commission can still discuss commercial permitting and the draft ordinance, if needed, after legal staff has been completed an ordinance.

UPDATE: STATUS OF STATE LAND REFORM

Carla advised the Commissioners that the first committee hearing in the Arizona Legislature had been held that afternoon, with two meetings per week scheduled. She explained that no public testimony would be heard and that the goal is to get passage by June 30th in Special Session for inclusion on the November 4 ballot. Carla stated that the Legislature was being asked to refer only twelve pages to the voters, consisting of the constitutional changes and the session law. She explained that the Legislature

were being asked to pass the statutes also, as everything is interconnected, but that the statutes were not voter protected and would allow the Legislature to come back and make adjustments in future sessions. She noted the importance of the session law, because that is where all of the lands on the map will be listed. And thus will need to be voter protected.

Commissioner Kovach inquired as to opposition. Carla replied that several conservation groups were in opposition due to some of the rural provisions allowing longer grazing leases.

UPDATE: SUNRISE TRIAL CONSTRUCTION

Ms. Miller stated that the Sunrise Trail had been completed and that the result was incredible. She reviewed the process employed by the contractor, which involved the use of a Bobcat and a great deal of handwork. She also noted that the contractor had nothing but praise for the assistance he received in the process from the stewards. Ms. Miller explained that there was some revegetation remaining near the trailhead due to a trail realignment issue with the surrounding residents.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Mr. Cafarella announced that Scott Hamilton from the Community Services Department would be joining his staff on July 1, 2004. He noted that Mr. Hamilton will continue to be the City's Trails Coordinator and that he was working on a program to utilize the stewards outside of the Preserve.

Commissioner Kovach recommended McDowell Sonoran Land Trust involvement in steward participation in a citywide trail system. Mr. Cafarella concurred. He went on to explain that Mr. Hamilton's duties would be field-oriented, allowing Ms. Miller more time for her other responsibilities.

Mr. Cafarella provided a summary of the next few years' improvements in the Preserve, including the Windgate Trail, the South Access Area, and the Gateway Access Area.

PRESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Miller noted the last of the work on Sunrise Trail, and numerous other Eagle Scout projects. She noted ongoing efforts with the State Land Department to manage motorized routes in the north Granite Mountain areas until purchase by the City for the Preserve. She pointed out a State Land Department order closing the red zone to motorized vehicles. There was discussion about a proposal to prohibit commercial operators in the north zone, where several now operate with or without permits.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Chair DeCabooter noted that the next scheduled meetings were July 1st and August 5th. He suggested canceling the August 5th meeting, but retaining the July 1st meeting for possible discussion on the State Land Reform issues. It was the consensus of the Commission that the recommendation was appropriate.

Commissioner Kovach suggested a discussion of a promotion committee of the Commission as a future agenda item. Carla noted that State Land Reform and Preserve Enforcement recommendations were additional items.

FUTURE EXECUTIVE SESSION

COMMISSIONER MYERS MOVED, AND COMMISSIONER KORTE SECONDED, A MOTION TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR JULY 1, 2004, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PUBLIC BODY AND CONSULTATION WITH CITY ATTORNEY FOR LEGAL ADVICE TO CONSIDER ITS POSITION AND INSTRUCT ITS REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING NEGOTIATING FOR PURCHASE OR LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR INCLUSION IN THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF EIGHT (8) TO ZERO (0).

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Carla reminded the Commissioners of the cookout at Ranch Nine on September 25th, and the Tour de Scottsdale, a 65-mile bike race on October 17th. Chair DeCabooter commended Carla for her outstanding work with the May 18th local preservation vote. Commissioners noted that the local election campaigns highlighted a need for the City and the Commission to provide clear and accurate information to the public on the Preserve.

ADJOURNMENT

Being duly moved and seconded, the regular meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

“For the Record” Reporters